TWO LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO

General William Hull

On his conduct as a Soldier, in the Surrender of Fort Detroit, to General Brock, without resistance, in the commencement of the late war with Great Britain.

BY TIMOTHY WALKER,
Of Hopkinton, Mass.

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PREFACE.

IF the question should be asked why the following letters to Gen. Hull were not written at, or about the time that he was tried and received his sentence I should answer and say at the time that I read his trial I had a strong inclination to write to him concerning his conduct, but for some reasons which I don't now well recollect (perhaps very frivolous,) I put it off from time to time until the early part of the year 1820 to which time for reasons which I have distinctly stated in my first letter to the General, I spent the greater part of my time in reading, and amongst many other things I came across some appropriate remarks that had been made on the treacherous and abominable conduct of Gen. Arnold, in the Revolutionary war which caused me to reflect back to that time, and think what an unpleasant situation I should have been in if Arnold had succeeded in his nefarious plan, being then a soldier on the lines, if I recollect right about twenty or twenty-five miles below King's Ferry, on the West side of the Hudson River, separated between two and three hundred miles from my parents, a wife and several small children which were as dear to me as my own life. I then thought by these reflections that I could form a correct idea of what must have been the feelings of the brave officers and soldiers that were so needlessly given up to their enemies by Gen. Hull in our late war. These reflections gave a fresh spring to my heretofore languid inclination to write to the General, so on the 12th of February, 1820 I set down and took my pen in hand for the sole purpose of expressing the real and

undisguised sentiments of my heart to Gen. Hull, relative to his abilities and conduct in former days, and also my pointed disaprobation of his conduct in upper Canada, and at Fort Detroit in our late war.

At the time I wrote the first letter to the General it was far from my intention ever so far to expose my weakness as to give the letter publicity, but after having the letter transcribed by a person that can write far better than I can myself at this advanced age, and sending the same to the General, I shewed the orignal to many persons, some of which advised me to have it printed, still I gave them but little encouragement of so doing, at length Mr. Lawson Mc'Farland of Hopkinton put into my hands a history entitled Sketches of the War ; and by perusing its pages in course, I came to a letter that was addressed to the secretary of War by Col. Lewis Cass, (now Governor Cass,) concerning his giving up Fort Detroit and the troops under his command to the enemy, and his sentiments & comments in that letter were so congenial to my feelings, and coincided so well with the essence of my letter to the General that I shortly after sent the General a second letter in which I gave him to understand that if I did not receive some answer from him shortly I should have the letter printed, and as I have not yet heard any thing from him, I have at length concluded to have the whole printed and sent abroad in the world without any expectation or desire to court praise, or without any dread or fear of offending any

THE AUTHOR.

Hopkinton, Febuary 12, 1820.

To Gen. William Hull,

Sir, I Timothy Walker, am a man that is far advanced in life. I am, this day, sixty seven years of age; and I live at present, in an humble sphere; and I am a man to whom the God of nature has not been over bountiful; and what adds to my misfortune, is, my acquired, are no better than my natural abilities. Yet I am not wholly without consolations for I have been endued with a very good memory, and I retain it, in some degree, to the present day, which I think is a very great blessing. And I have another, very exalted consolation, which is, I belong to that class of men, sir, as well as yourself, to whom President Monroe, in eighteen hundred seventeen, in his answer to an address from the society of Cincinati, in the City of Philadelphia, said "that nothing can be more gratifying to me, than to meet the surviving members of my associates in arms, who distinguished themselves in the revolutionary contest."

Notwithstanding, sir, you and I were in the tented fields, in the Revolutionry war at the same time, yet I cannot say that I ever knew, or saw your face, until after that war was over. But since that contest closed I have known you in various capacities. I have known you as a Judge of the Common-plea Court, and I have known you in your mil-

itary capacity. When you was a Brigadier General, I had occasion, in the capacity of Clerk of the west Company in Hopkinton, to make complaint against two persons for neglect of duty, at a brigade muster in Waltham, and we had trial before you, at your dwelling-house, near Angers Corner in Newton; and I must confess that I had, at that time, a very good opinion of your abilities, and also of your conduct; and my good opinion did follow you round, through the various posts of honor and profit, that were subsequently confered on you by Government. And after our late war, in eighteen hundred and twelve, was declared against Great Britain, and I learnt by the public papers, that you was appointed to take command of the northwestern army, I was well pleased from a belief that your patriotism, courage, and generalship, would be adequate to the important undertaking; and when it was announced in the papers, that Gen. Hull had crossed over, & planted the American standard in U. Canada my heart almost leaped for joy, from a belief, that, if you did not conquer the whole of the Upper Province, you would soon make yourself master of the enemies' out-post.—And it did appear as though you might have taken Fort Malden with ease, and with but very little loss of men, if you had put the plan into execution, which was conceived by the council of war which you had called together for that purpose. But instead of so

doing, you struck your colours and tents, re-crossed the river, took shelter in Fort Detroit, and left all the inhabitants of Upper Canada that had stayed at home, and not taken up arms on either side; and all those that flocked to your standard, to whom you had promised protection in your pompous proclamation, to the mercy only of the merciless.— And then, sir, your sun of glory set, and never has shewn his head since; and left you overshadowed with a dark cloud. And it was not long after, that another, still darker cloud arose in your hemisphere, in the fog and mist of which, you did not only give up Fort Detroit, with all the stores that were in it of every description, and the whole of the Michigan Territory, but you gave up yourself, and a very respectable body of officers and soldiers that, in all probability, would have fought like a band of spartans, if they had been commanded by a Macomb, a Brown, a Harrison, or by the gallaot and intrepid Major Crogan, who so boldly, and successfully thundered death & carnage through the ranks of his enemies, at Lower Sandusky. Such are the men, sir, that you gave up to the disposal of a cruel and barbarous enemy, which you might, in all probability, have repelled, and caused to retreat with great loss. And it is my soul's opinion, that you would have made the attempt, at least, if you had not approximated nigher to the character of a traitor, or paltroon, than you did to that of

× That Proclamation was a [illegible] inct document, except the part relating to the Indians. The

a patriotic and bold commander. A shocking, shocking, and lamentable tale!

At length, after a considerable lapse of time, you was formally exchanged, and a Court Martial appointed, and you held to answer to certain charges and specifications, which were alledged against you, concerning your conduct again. After some considerable length of time, a good friend of mine put into my hand a pamphlet, that gave a full, and no doubt, a correct account of your trial and [illegible]; and I lost no time in reading until I finished it. And you may well conceive that by that time, the undisguised good [illegible], which I formerly had of you, was [illegible] changed, that it would have sunk to the bottom of the bottomless pit, if there had been any such place. Now I must take the liberty, so far to digress, as to employ my pen for a few moments, to tell some things about other persons, whose characters stand at present, as far above yours, as the heavens are higher than the earth. By reason of old age and infirmities, the extreme depth of the snow and the severity of the weather, I have not done much of late, but amuse myself with books. And I have lately read the Naval Biography for the second or third time. It gives a particular account of the births, parentage, and noble deeds of eighteen of our Naval heroes. And I have in the course of the present week, been reading President Monroe's tour, through the

northwestern States in eighteen hundred seventeen. And when I take into consideration the many distinquished and marked civilities, praises, and honors, that were so meritoriously bestowed on him; and also the unblemished characters and valiant deeds of our naval heroes, and attempt to contrast them with the character of Gen. Wm. Hull, in our late war with Great Britain, I must confess I know of no language, that would be competent to discribe it. But suffice it to say, if I had the wisdom of Solomon, and the eloquence of Cicero, I think the task would be too hard for me to perform. Now, sir, whether you have ever considered of your conduct in your retired hours, or not, *I* cannot say; but this *I* think *I* can safely say, if you ever have reflected back, and duly considered how many tears of sorrow, days of mourning, and sleepless nights have been spent by the Fathers and Mothers, Sisters and Brothers, of these unhappy men that you so needlessly and basely gave up to a cruel enemy, many of whom were transported to an inhospitable clime, and there made to suffer with cold and hunger; *I* say sir, if ever you have seriously considered of those things, I should not have thought it strange, if you had, Judas like, gone and hanged yourself. But, sir, I not only advise, but intreat of you never to be guilty of suicide, for that will only add new weight to your load of guilt, which, it would seem, is already heavy enough to sink the town in which you live,

if there were not more than five or ten righteous persons in it, to ward and parry off the frowns and judgments of heaven. I very well know, sir, it is an old saying, it is hard to twit by facts; but how it is, that you can content yourself, and have the boldness to stay among people that know you have justly forfeited your life, and have had the sentence of death pronounced upon you for a crime, which ought never to have been pardoned; and that it is only from the clemency of President Madison, that you are now the living monuments of God's sparing mercy is a mystery to me.

Therefore, if I were to give you any further advice, it would be to stay no longer in Newton, to shelter your guilty head under the roof of a splendid mansion, which, I have great reason to believe, was built with British gold! which, I think, ought to have been otherwise appropriated. I think it would been better, if it had been put to the same use that the Chief Priests put the thirty pieces of silver to, which were given to Judas, to betray his master; which was to buy the potter's field, for a place to bury strangers in, because, they said, it was the price of blood; Or, if it had been God's will to have it applied to you, as the ancient natives of South America did their shining ore to Fernando Cortez, who was one of the earliest Spanish adventurers to that region, which was to pour it down his throat, boiling hot, through a funnel, I verily believe in my heart,

there are a great many people, that would have said, Amen, Amen! the will of the Lord is done.

> Is there not some curse, some hidden thunder
> Red with uncommon wrath!
> To blast the wretch, that owes his greatness
> To his countries ruin!!

For fear that I shall give you some occasion to think, that I am too sarcastic, and bear down too hard, I will change my discourse, go back and tell what whold be my further advice, if I was under any obligation to give it; which would be for you to stay no longer in Newton, but repair without delay to some unfrequented wilderness, where the footsteps of no human being ever before were seen; and were no voice is to be heard, but the hideous yells of ferocious beasts of prey, that are thirsting for your blood; and there in an humble, yea in a very humble, and peuitent manner with deep contrition of heart, fall down on your knees, and endeavour, by your unfeigned and unceasing prayers and tears, to appease the wrath of an offended God, and if possible, obtain forgiveness for the sins that you have committed against him and your country;—and there remain a despised and miserable Troglodyte, until death shall end the scene.

I hope, sir, you will have the goodness to receive, and read this long scrawl with composure, and keep it for an admonisher; it is

possible, it may be the means of saving your soul alive. By so doing, you will oblige your friend, TIMOTHY WALKER.

Gen. Wm. Hull.

N. B. If you are disposed to make a return, it will gladly be received by me.

Hopkinton, November 18th, 1820.

SIR,

Nine months ago this day I addressed a long letter to you in which I bestowed upon you as I then, and now think some merited encomiums respecting your abilities and conduct in former days. I also with as much frankness in the same letter expressed my pointed disaprobation against your detestable and deleterious conduct while at the head of the North Western army in upper Canada, and at Fort Detroit in our late war with Great Britian.

At the time I sent the letter to you, I entertained a strong hope and had some expectation that I should receive an answer to my letter, from you, but alas ! those expectations have long ago been at an end.—Therefore I take this method to inform you, sir, that I have now in my possession the original letter in my own hand writing, from which, the letter I sent to you was copied, and that I have, at divers times and by divers persons, been importuned to have said letter printed. Now, sir, unless I receive,

and that without delay, some permanent and satisfactory objections to the measure from you, I have made up my mind to yield to those importunities, and have the letter printed and sent abroad into the world; where I fancy it will be read with delight by his excellency Governor Cass, & by the freemen in the Michigan Tetritory, whom it appears, you was willing to make vassal slaves at the time that you gave up Fort Detroit.

from yours,

TIMOTHY WALKER.

To Gen. WILLIAM HULL.

FINIS.